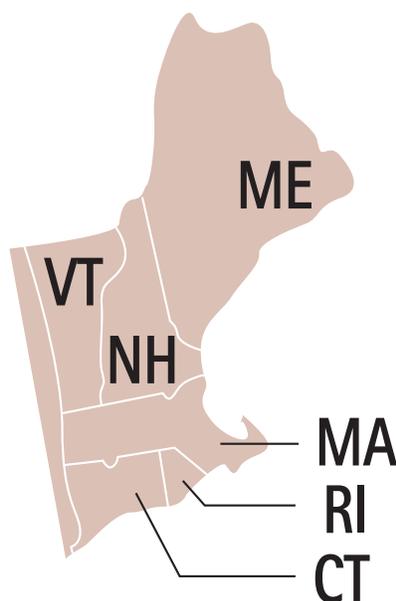




Region 1 Environmental Finance Center

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE



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BACKGROUND & SUMMARY

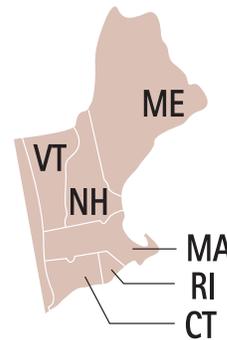
The Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Southern Maine, located in the Muskie School of Public Service, serves the six New England states of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Region 1 (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut). The primary focuses of the New England EFC are land use and conservation issues. The purpose of the EFC is to further the joint goals of EPA and the Muskie School of advancing creative approaches to environmental protection and management, especially with regard to the associated "how-to-pay" questions.

In particular, the center works to promote the understanding and practice of smart growth throughout New England, build local capacity to deal with related issues, and develop and apply techniques that go beyond basic compliance with government regulations.

The New England EFC began its activities in 2001 and has undertaken a broad range of initiatives in the intervening four years. Calendar year 2005 was a period of considerable activity in numerous areas, including the following:

- Completed the development of an online course on conservation finance.
- Developed a public lecture series on changes in Maine from 1960 through 2010.
- Developed and delivered a training series for communities on controlling sprawl.
- Created a video and also wrote articles, reports and case studies to promote financing approaches and land development issues.

REGION 1



- Worked with legislative and related groups to research options for a legislative agenda to control land use in Maine.
- Moderated conference sessions, gave presentations, and organized workshops related to smart growth, land management, sprawl, and watershed management.
- Analyzed issues associated with military base closings in Maine.



ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Completed Projects & Initiatives

CONSERVATION FINANCE COURSE

The New England EFC developed an online course in conservation finance, now available at <http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/tools.html>. The EFC began advertising in June, including demonstrating the course during a webcast entitled “Protecting Water Resources Through Land Conservation: Funding Options for Local Governments” to encourage use of this tool. The webcast presentation was a collaborative effort between the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), in cooperation with EPA.



PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

The EFC initiated a “Changing Maine” public lecture series, presented by the Old Fort Western of Augusta, Maine, based upon the book, *Changing Maine, 1960–2010* and oriented toward the historical and decision-making communities of Maine’s Kennebec Valley. The book summary can be viewed as publication #04-05 at <http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/pubs.htm>.



ARTICLES AND MEDIA OUTREACH

The EFC posted the following articles on its Web site (<http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/pubs.htm>):

- **Stormwater Utility Fees: Considerations and Options**
<http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/docs/StormwaterUtilityFeeReport.pdf>.
- **Analysis of Per Capita Expenditures of Suburbanizing Communities in Maine**
<http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/docs/PerCapitaExpenditureAnalysis.pdf>.
- **Standardizing Geospatial Information for New England Conservation Lands**
<http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/docs/StandardizingGeospatialInformation.pdf>.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2005, the New England EFC...

- ◆ Provided nine technical assistance responses to individuals or organizations requesting assistance with finance issues in smart growth or planning of smart growth-oriented projects in New England.
- ◆ Published three articles on its Web site.
- ◆ Moderated, presented, organized, hosted, or participated in 16 conferences and meetings.
- ◆ Developed more than six outreach and educational tools, such as a video, case studies, and a lecture series.

Ongoing Projects & Initiatives

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Next Communities Initiatives



From model ordinances to financial instruments, a wide variety of smart growth tools are now available to local land use decision-makers and stakeholders. The piece of smart growth that the Next Communities Initiative (NCI) addresses is the effective use and implementation of these tools at the local government level. NCI is training motivated community leaders and lay planners to help them facilitate smart growth-oriented change in their cities and towns. The first step, in calendar year 2004, was to develop a three-day workshop series for citizen leaders to 1) teach that change toward more sustainable land use is both desirable and possible; 2) foster an understanding of the intricacies and subtleties of local government and politics; and 3) explore obstacles to smart growth and how they can be overcome at the local level.

The workshop was delivered twice in 2004 and once in 2005. The curriculum now exists as three eight-hour, highly interactive and experiential sessions:

Session One: Participants come to understand sprawl not as a technical problem, but as (in Maine terms) a “wicked” problem, and one that is ill defined. The EFC explores sprawl as a problem because there is a lack of consensus on its causes and because it lacks obvious solutions. Often proposed solutions involve challenging trade-offs, and fierce, value-based opposition. Participants gain insights to become informed leaders in the discussion of sprawl and advocates of solutions that seek a wider public good without undue injury to private interests and concerns. Participants leave the session with a mindset that smart growth is an objective worthy of pursuit and are ready to explore how to navigate change through the local political system.

Session Two: This session educates individuals about local government processes, both formal and informal. It helps those interested in changing local land use policies understand the twists and turns of local government, what motivates and constrains it, how to mobilize and support the town’s opinion leaders and citizens, and how to navigate the system to effect change.

Session Three: Conflict and change often go hand-in-hand. This session teaches community leaders basic skills to deal constructively with conflict over both basic values and perceived interests. It prepares them to handle both personal and social conflict in the community setting. It also includes a final capstone game where the skills, ideas, and information learned in the previous sessions are applied to a practical case.

Building on the successful delivery of the first sets of workshops, the New England EFC aims to move the NCI curriculum into a train-the-trainer format. By equipping organizations with these curriculum materials and a comprehensive instructor’s manual, it should be possible to reach a broader audience and

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make a substantial contribution to smart growth-oriented local land use change.

Water Program

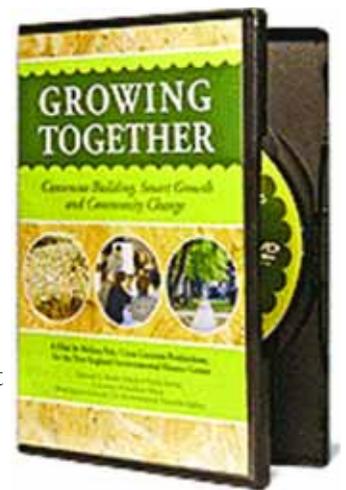
In 2005, the EFC continued its program in water-related finance and outreach activities. These activities included:

- Expanding the Directory of Watershed Resources, originally created by the Region 10 EFC in Boise, Idaho, and now updated to include more than 300 funding sources specific to New England (posted at <http://efc.boisestate.edu/>).
- Conducting additional outreach activities based on the watershed directory and developing a report documenting lessons learned and recommended protocols for maintaining and updating the directory.
- Releasing an updated version of the EFC's Stormwater Finance report, which includes a new financial analysis section (see Stormwater Utility Fees: Considerations and Options at <http://efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/docs/StormwaterUtilityFeeReport.pdf>).
- Organizing and moderating finance panels for two EPA-sponsored workshops on reducing beach closures in New England (see Presentations/Conferences below).
- Presenting finance options at a Maine Beaches Conference (see Presentations/Conferences below).
- Organizing a forum on asset management attended by three of Maine's larger public water systems.
- Co-sponsoring a train-the-trainer event on asset management for the Maine Rural Water Program, Maine Drinking Water Program, and others.
- Developing an interactive, online self-evaluation on water system financial capacity.



Smart Growth Video

In 2005, the EFC produced a video ("Growing Together: Consensus Building, Smart Growth, and Community Change") for communities in New England grappling with tough issues around land development. The video provides municipal officials, developers, and community members a step-by-step guide on working together to arrive at mutually beneficial land development plans. The video includes examples of places like Lawrence, Massachusetts, that have been successful using consensus-building techniques to achieve smart growth. Case studies and interviews with experts emphasize the need for community visioning and engaging everyone affected by a proposed development.



The video was shown to select audiences around New England in late 2005 and also was a recipient

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of a bronze Telly, an international award given to honor outstanding video and film production. In 2006, the video was made available to municipal officials, local opinion leaders, lay planners, community activists, developers, and others via the New England EFC Web site at <efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu>.

Implementation of Recommendations to Strengthen Maine's Rural Economy and the Natural Resources Based Industries on Which It Is Based

In 2005, the EFC provided continuing chairmanship of a "Steering Committee to Oversee Implementation of Recommendations from the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Natural Resource-Based Industries." The November 2003 Blaine House Conference produced 75 recommendations for action in the agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism sectors that are the foundation of Maine's rural economy and landscape. As documented in its December 2004 report to the governor, which can be viewed at <www.state.me.us/spo/natural/gov>, the Steering Committee oversaw significant progress on implementation of 60 of these recommendations by the executive agencies directly responsible. Implementation of these recommendations continued in 2005.

Land Use Law Provisions

In 2004, the New England EFC published some model amendments to Maine's (and other states') land use control legislation in the Maine Law Review. This document is available as publication #04-06 at <efc.muskie.usm.maine.edu/pubs.htm>. The model amendments originated directly from the EFC's roundtable discussions in 2002, and are designed to address the legal obstacles to smart growth identified by roundtable participants. The EFC assisted (and continued to assist in 2005) the Community Preservation Advisory Committee of the Maine Legislature, GrowSmart Maine, and others in researching options for a legislative agenda based upon these model amendments.

GIS Inventory of Protected Lands Data

In 2005, the EFC completed a Geographic Markup Tool to allow online upgrades to conservation lands

data sets. Complementary software applications were also incorporated into the tool, contributing to the creation of a unified framework for capturing conservation lands data in Maine and EPA Region 1 as a whole. Discussions continued about how to incorporate all or a portion of the technology into existing open space data management efforts in the six New England states.

Other Efforts

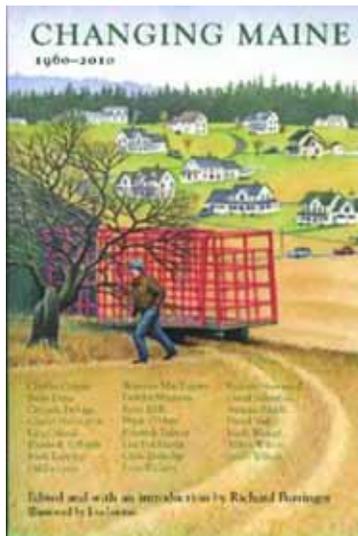
At the request of the governor of Maine, the EFC conducted economic impact analyses of the Department of Defense (DoD) recommendations for military base closures and realignment in the states of New Hampshire and Maine. The EFC reported and presented results to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission at a public hearing in Boston, and thereafter conducted cost impact analyses of these DoD recommendations at the request of the commission.

PRESENTATIONS/CONFERENCES

- Moderated a conference session, "The Frontiers of Rural Smart Growth" at the Smart Growth Network annual meeting in Miami, Florida.
- Moderated a conference session, "Regional Land Management and Sprawl" at the Legislative Policy Forum on Economic Development in Augusta, Maine.
- Delivered a presentation, "New Initiatives for Maine's Natural Resources-Based Industries" at the Maine Legislators Policy Forum on Economic Development in Augusta, Maine.
- Delivered a half-day workshop in Concord, New Hampshire, to 100 planners and others interested in smart growth. This event focused on policy innovations developed through the New England EFC.
- Delivered a half-day training event, "Negotiation Skills for Land Conservationists" at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust Annual Meeting.

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- Co-organized a one-day workshop, “Community Problem-Solving Through Collaboration” at an event sponsored by the Maine Collaborative Practices Working Group in Hallowell, Maine.
- Hosted a half-day conference for the EFC-led initiative, Forum on Residential Density, in Portland, Maine.
- Participated on a panel session, “A Web-Based Geographic Markup Tool for Capturing Conservation Lands Data” at the 20th Annual Northeast Arc-Users Group Conference.
- Presented “Smart Growth and Water Resources: The High Density Dilemma,” a speech at an EPA-sponsored workshop on the Saco River Watershed in Biddeford, Maine.
- Discussed “Funding and Donation Sources for Watershed Management” at an EPA-sponsored workshop on the Saco River Watershed in Biddeford, Maine.
- Spoke about “A Web-Based Geographic Markup Tool for Capturing Conservation Lands Data” a session at the 20th Annual Northeast Arc-Users Group Conference in Portland, Maine.
- Spoke about “Rural Land Protection: Thinking Strategically” at the Annual Meeting of the Western Foothills Land Trust in Oxford, Maine.
- Spoke about the book, *Changing Maine, 1960–2010* to the Maine Society of Washington D.C. at its annual meeting in Arlington, Virginia.
- Provided an overview and moderated finance panels at two conferences on reducing beach closures, one held in Warwick, RI, and the other in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.
- Presented “Financing Approaches and EFC Resources” at annual Maine Beaches Conference in Wells, Maine.
- Spoke about “Land Conservation in Urban Areas: What Is Most Strategic?” at a Greater Portland Neighborhoods Conference in Portland, Maine.



New Projects & Initiatives

FORUM ON RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

The escalating debate in New England between those who advocate for smart growth and those who advocate for the suburban lifestyle associated with sprawl urgently need reference points on the question that is central to both sides: residential density. The New England EFC has conducted initial investigations into a two-year expert consensus forum on residential density as an aid to the small cities, towns, and suburbs of New England embroiled in this debate. Efforts are underway to fund a forum devoted exclusively to this issue, the product of which would be an authoritative manual on the standards of residential density that best promote the public health, safety, and welfare.

A LIBRARY OF CASE STUDIES

One obstacle to smart growth across New England is that so few smart developments have been built in the past three-quarters of a century. Here and there on the New England landscape they are beginning to appear. As they do, however, it is important to learn how and why they come to fruition. The EFC is developing a series of case studies as the basis for both establishing the causes and means of these developments and as useful tools for instructing others how they may be replicated on the landscape. The cases are being identified in collaboration with EPA Region 1. As they are completed they will be

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posted on the New England EFC Web site in an accessible and interactive format.

MILITARY BASE REDEVELOPMENT CONSULTING/INVOLVEMENT

In late 2004, the President released a new round of military base closures for the United States, including several in New England. Given the difficulties of accomplishing large-scale smart growth development in the New England context, each base closure represents an opportunity for smart growth implementation. In 2005, the EFC assisted in capitalizing on these opportunities through economic impact analysis for several installations in Maine.

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SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION/DEMONSTRATION

Housed within a university, the EFC is in a position to explore opportunities for utilizing university-owned land and facilities to develop in a smart growth manner. In 2005, the EFC coordinated multi-stakeholder input on redevelopment options being considered by the University of Southern Maine for the Portland Hall parcel (3.5 acres) in downtown Portland. Based on the feedback, the EFC created a suggested approach to redevelop the parcel for the president of the university.



Outcomes

As a result of the activities and accomplishments outlined in the previous section, outcomes have included the following benefits to communities and individuals:

- A clearer understanding of tradeoffs involved in choosing various methods for financing stormwater utilities.
- A clearer understanding of the need for public investment in open space acquisition.
- A broader understanding of the role that the creative economy has in supporting downtown revitalization efforts.
- A broader understanding of the social, political, and other changes that have transpired in Maine during the last 40 years and how they should shape current policy discussions.
- A broader understanding among land trusts and other conservation groups of the need for incorporating growth-related criteria in their land acquisition prioritization systems.
- A broader understanding of the role that a vibrant natural resource-based economy plays in the protection of the landscape, the restraint of sprawl, and the promotion of smart growth.
- A greater chance that novel, comprehensive innovations in land use law might be adopted in Maine and throughout New England.

Because the work of the New England EFC focuses on reducing sprawl, we are asked to help identify and recommend modifications in land use policy at the state level. Impacts of some of these changes might be observable as a decline in the number of standard subdivisions in the state over a substantial period of time.

Impacts

In 2005, the New England EFC continued its mission to helping communities identify methods for funding environmental initiatives. Specific environmental issues addressed through the EFC's activities and accomplishments include:

- Land use and conservation
- Smart growth
- Watershed protection